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ABSTRACT

Developmental activities and experiences of the University of Nebraska at Omaha/Omaha Westside Community Schools' five-year teacher preparation program are described. The program is designed to prepare classroom educators in a field-oriented, competency-based program involving a fifth year, partially-paid, pre-teaching experience. Program description and development, objectives, goals, and budget are discussed; contributions to the improvement of teacher education are noted; and formative evaluation efforts based upon participant feedback are described. (MJB)

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA/
WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
COMPETENCY-BASED FIELD ORIENTED
TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF INTENT TO ENTER THE AACTE AWARDS PROGRAM FOR 1978

13

If an entry is to be submitted for both the DAA and Recognition Roll categories, please photocopy this form and submit two separate statements of intent.

Full Legal Name of Institution: University of Nebraska at Omaha

City and State: Omaha, Nebraska

Name of Program or Practice: UNO/WCS TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

Name/Title of Program Director or Person Responsible for Sound Practice:
Dr. Dale M. Bunsen

Building and Room Number: Kayser Hall 107D Phone: 554-2205

Name/Title of Institutional Public Information Officer: Charles Hein-Director, University Relat

SP012 492

TYPE OF ENTRY: (Not more than one entry in *each* category per form and per institution).

X Program Entry for the DAA Program

___ Recognition Roll for Sound Practice

Signature of AACTE Chief Institutional Representative

Name: Edward Dejnozka

Title: Dean, College of Education

Date: October 21 19 77

Please detach and mail to AACTE on or before October 31, 1977.

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DO NOT FILM

The University of Nebraska at Omaha
Box 688 Omaha, Nebraska 68101 402/554-2717

College of Education
Office of the Dean

November 18, 1977

Distinguished Achievement
Award Program AACTE
Suite 610 - One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Sir:

Attached to this letter of transmission is a copy of: The University of Nebraska at Omaha/Westside Community Schools Competency Based-Field Oriented Teacher Preparation Program.

The College of Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, with the Westside Community Schools, is submitting this jointly designed and developed program as a candidate for the 1978 Distinguished Achievement Award bestowed by AACTE.

Not only is this an exciting program, but we believe that it can serve as a viable model for future pre-service teacher education programs. The cooperative nature and commitment from both institutions, coupled with the developed competencies, makes this an extremely unique program.

If I can supply additional information, please feel free to call on me.

Sincerely yours,

Edward L. Dejnozka
Dean

Section One

Summary

Summary

The program being described has not reached a stage where the entire effort can be evaluated. This can only be done some years hence, since it involves a five-year teacher preparation program. This program includes a competency-based field component to be completed by students in a public school setting. Students are presently in the first year of this field-based component. Therefore, it is the intent of the authors of this entry to describe and submit the mechanisms employed to reach the present stage of our pilot five-year teacher preparation program.

It includes the Curriculum and Instruction faculty (Secondary and Elementary Education Departments) of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and the educators of the Omaha Westside Community Schools. The effort comprises the cooperative construction of field-based competencies for students by these two agencies, i.e. a University and an area public school. Each student progresses toward completion of these competencies in a building of a cooperating public school. The student is a member of a "competency progress team" which includes himself, a University monitor, and a cooperating teacher in the public school. This three-person team mutually targets the student's competency completion time and the field activities necessary to support competency achievement.

This University-Public School cooperative venture has developed a program wherein the students field-based component is systematized and graduated through the fifth year. In the fifth year, the student's will serve as a paid teaching intern in the cooperating public school.

Section Two

Comprehensive Explanation and Analysis

Program Description and Development

The ground work for the Westside Community Schools/UNO Teacher Preparation Program was laid in the Spring of 1976 during a meeting between the Superintendent of the Schools of the Westside Community School District and the Dean of the College of Education at UNO. The two sought ways of finding and developing closer ties between the two institutions to improve the quality of teachers within the school system by improving the training of students in the College of Education.

Both institutions saw advantages to such arrangements. The advantages to the College of Education included the following:

1. Within the College of Education, a Curriculum and Instruction structure was being developed. This unit would encompass the Departments of Elementary Early Childhood Education and Secondary/Post-Secondary Education. The teacher preparatory project seemed to be an appropriate area for this new structure to focus on, since the program would cover the entire K-12 preparation spectrum.
2. The program provided an opportunity to organize and systematize field experiences for students in the teacher preparation program in the college. Up to this point, those field experiences had been structured largely on a hit-or-miss basis with very little attempt to look at the nature, quality, or extent of these experiences prior to the student teaching (which normally took place at the student's senior level). This program would move the field experience aspect of the teacher preparation program to a much earlier time in the pre-service teacher education curriculum.

3. The College was currently taking an in-depth review of the basic foundations courses that the students in the teacher preparation program were required to take. The task force reviewing this component recognized the need to incorporate strong field experiences into these foundations courses. The UNO/Westside Community Schools program was viewed as a suitable program in which to explore such a change. The information obtained through such a program might be useful input into the revised foundation program development.
4. With a decreasing demand for students who were completing certification requirements through the College of Education, the opportunity to be closely allied with a school district might enhance the probability of placing students in the system.

The advantages to the School District included the following:

1. There would be the opportunity to be involved to a greater extent in the selection of the students who would participate in the field experience program, and would thus provide school district with a better opportunity to examine potential teachers for the district.
2. For those students who were selected to participate in and complete the program, there would be a better "fit" between those students and the district itself. The problems that the district had encountered in training and adapting newly graduated teachers to the district would be lessened, if this gradual development took place.

3. The district and the teaching staff itself would have input into the teacher preparation program...a concern that has been felt not only by teachers in the Omaha area but across the country as well.

Once the Dean and the Superintendent agreed upon the mutual advantages of exploring such a project, the next step was to organize and develop the project itself. The initial exploration and definition of the program activities came about through a series of meetings held between College of Education personnel and Westside Community School teachers and administrators. Exploratory discussions between various members of these two groups took place during the first half of 1976-77. Task forces, whose responsibility would be to design the program, were formed. These task forces became operable by mid-year of 1976-77. Three task forces were formed. (One had the responsibility of exploring ways of establishing stronger cooperative ties between the two institutions, relative to an in-service program for the already employed district teachers. However, since the focus of the paper is upon pre-service development, the inservice program will not be discussed here. The other two focused on pre-service education.) The two task forces involved in the pre-service preparation program were: one for the Elementary level; one for the Secondary level. Representatives from both the College of Education and District #66 schools served on these task forces.

The task forces had three basic goals

1. To develop the broad parameters for the total field base teacher preparation program. This evolved into a four-year program which would begin at the sophomore level for students enrolled

in the certificate program. In effect, this meant that a five-year teacher preparation program would result.

2. A second goal was to develop the specific competencies that would be developed by students involved in the first year of the program. Since the desire was to have the program in operation by the Fall of 1977, the first year's experiences for those students in the program was the most pressing problem. Once this has been accomplished, later aspects of the program could be dealt with.
3. The third goal of the task forces was to develop the activities and experiences the student should have to attain the competencies specified.

As a result of the task force deliberations, which extended throughout the Spring Semester of the 1976-77 school year and for a full week during the early summer of 1977, these goals were accomplished. The broad outlines of a four-year field based program were developed, specific competencies for both the Elementary and Secondary levels were written, and a set of possible experiences and activities for the students to engage in to attain the competencies were developed.

Parallel to the activities of the task forces was the development of procedures for recruiting and selecting students to participate in the program. Students who were engaged in the initial phases of the regular teacher certification program were the prime targets for this recruitment and selection effort. Because of the pilot nature of the program, a limit of ten students was placed on the group to be selected. Ten students did apply for participation in the program. All met the criteria established for participation, and thus were admitted to the program for

the Fall semester.

Once the task forces had completed the development of the competencies and experiences for the initial year of the program, manuals were prepared which the students could use as guides for their progress to attainment of the competencies. This was done during the latter part of the summer of 1977.

Concurrently, various designs of monitoring teams to assist the students and to monitor students progress through the program were developed. For a variety of reasons, the ultimate design for the monitoring team consisted of one cooperating teacher at the site school and one monitor from the University to work with each student.

At the beginning of the Fall Semester of 1977-78, the students were ready to start the program. Of the ten who originally applied and were accepted, eight remained in the program. The other two voluntarily disenrolled themselves. Basic mechanics of meeting with the students, having them introduced to the various personnel working in the program, assigning them to site schools, and assigning the cooperating teachers and monitors, occupied much of the first month of the program. The two major activities of the project for the remainder of the Fall Semester have been, 1) to develop evaluation materials and procedures whereby the cooperating teachers, monitors, and students can evaluate the program and provide feedback to the developers, and 2) to determine how well the various monitoring teams are functioning.

Objectives and Goals

Fundamental to this Teacher Preparation Effort are the following:

1. To guide students into the learning environment (the student, the school, the instructional materials) earlier and with much more direction.
2. To develop a systematized, graduated approach to the field-based component of a students teacher education program.
3. To construct a prototype five year teacher preparation program including a progressively greater field-based component and culminating with a paid teaching internship during the students fifth year.
4. To establish a definitive University-Public School relationship wherein the commitment planning, and development of a five-year teacher preparation program is cooperative, equal, and continuous.

The above objectives and goals have already resulted in successful interactive planning between University and Public School faculties. It has resulted in an enthusiastic group of students working to achieve the first year, field-based competencies. This is complemented by the competency progress teams (Student, University Monitor, Public School Cooperating teacher) that mutually target competency completion, judge the student's completed competencies, and make continuing recommendations for competency changes if necessary. Both the University and the Public School are viewing the student who will enter the teaching profession and the program preparing this student with much greater commitment and responsibility.

Budget

To present an adequate description of budget and budgetary procedures used to support this program, a brief overview of an organizational framework within the University of Nebraska at Omaha, College of Education is necessary.

The organization framework is called the Curriculum and Instruction Division and includes all faculty of two autonomous departments, namely, The Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education and The Department of Secondary/Post-Secondary Education. The Curriculum and Instruction Division is directed by a Curriculum and Instruction Coordinating Council. This Council has equal membership from each of the two departments plus one member from one or the other departments appointed by the Dean of the College. To divide the Council's workload and to direct its activities, council members are assigned to one of four sections. These are as follows:

Systematics Section - This is the management section of the Council. Example duties include recommending budget, program evaluation, student registrations, maintaining liaison with other departments and governing bodies within the College of Education. The Council Chairman is automatically a member of this Section.

Internal Affairs Section - This is the section concerned with all Curriculum and Instruction thrusts that involve our own courses and programming on and within the University itself.

External Affairs Section - This is the section concerned with courses and programs directly involving the University and Public and Private K-12 schools. Obviously, this is the section that is responsible

for the teacher preparation program being submitted for the award.

Alliances Section - This is the section responsible for developing interfaces or alliances with agencies other than K-12 public and private schools. There are numerous agencies within the business and governmental sectors which have requested assistance in developing education and training programs for their employees. The Alliance Section is charged with the task of responding to these requests.

The External Affairs Section and the Chairman of the Curriculum and Instruction Coordinating Council have the responsibility for the development of the program being submitted.

During the 1976-77 academic year, the Chairman of the Curriculum and Instruction Coordinating Council was allocated $1,000 to support the beginning efforts of the program. The Council Chairman distributed $500 to each of the two departments (Elementary & Early Childhood and Secondary/Post-Secondary) to support faculty that served on the competency writing task forces. These first-level competencies (10 for the elementary student and 15 for the secondary student) were completed in the summer of 1977.

The implementation phase, which began in September of 1977, had two sources of funding.

1. Non departmental funding was allocated from the general College of Education budget. The amount of $6,000 was allocated to support the University monitors on the competency progress teams and to support the continuing task force members charged with writing second-level competencies.

2. The Chairman of the Curriculum and Instruction Coordinating Council wrote a proposal to the University Provost requesting Zero-Based Improvement of Instruction funds. This proposal was approved, thus an additional $2,275 was made available which supports faculty mileage, instructional materials, evaluation mechanisms, and secretarial assistance. This funding will cease at the end of the 1977-78 academic year, as do all zero-based budget allocations.

The Omaha Westside Community Schools (District #66) has agreed to support this effort as follows:

1. Release appropriate faculty members to serve on competency writing task forces.
2. To employ the student participants in a teacher aide status during their third year in the program (the fourth year of their undergraduate degree program). They will be paid the same amount as regular aides employed by the school district.
3. To pay the salaries of the student participants during their fourth year in the program (the fifth year of their undergraduate program). No formal agreements as to salary amounts have been established. However, 49% of a beginning teacher salary has been proposed.

Contributions to the Improvement of Teacher Education

The full impact of the total program, its effectiveness as a model for improving the training of students who are planning to be teachers, and reassessment of the competency of those who complete the preparation program, cannot be assessed at this time. However, some of the basic objectives of the program have been accomplished.

It has been demonstrated that it is possible for representatives from a school district and a teacher training institution to work together and agree upon competencies and experiences that pre-service teacher training students should have. It has also been demonstrated that despite the rigor and length of the program developed, students are interested in such a program and see the advantages to having a specific, closely monitored field base experience, and to attaining a higher level of competence. A pattern and model for interaction between representatives of the school district and faculty teacher training institution have been prepared. Difficulties and stumbling blocks that such program development encounters have been identified. Ways of overcoming these difficulties have been determined. To this point, the reaction of the students, the faculty members and administrators in the school district and the faculty and administrators from the College of Education have been highly positive. This is even more significant since many of those currently involved in the program were not involved in the initial development stages. The fact that newcomers to the program can see its benefits and appreciate its value seems to speak well for the program development to this point.

Evaluation Methods and Results

At this point in time, a total evaluation design has not been developed. The initial steps in the evaluation of the program have been to determine to what extent the initial objectives and goals have been accomplished. The existence of a program, the fact that students are participating, the fact that the monitoring team are functioning provide evidence that a program has been developed and is functional. Currently, evaluation of the first year's experiences is underway through means of feedback instruments that the participants are completing and submitting. These primarily involve reactions to the materials, the experiences, and the competencies that are involved in the program. While it is too early to determine the level of student performance, the informal accounts provided by both monitors and cooperating teachers indicate that the students are performing well and that the program is having a positive effect, not only on the students but on those faculty members who are participating in it. This is further attested to by the support letter from the Superintendent of the Omaha Westside Community Schools. This letter is included as an Appendix. While it is also too early to make definitive recommendations to others who might be interested in such a program, it is possible to indicate that the process of program development requires much time, energy, and manpower. Institutions lacking either such resources or the commitment to activate them should not attempt a program of this nature.

Appendix

The Westside Community Schools
DISTRICT 66 ADMINISTRATION OFFICE 909 SOUTH 76th OMAHA, NE. 68114 402/391-0546

November 17, 1977

Dr. Edward L. Dejnozka
Dean, College of Education
The University of Nebraska at Omaha
Box 688
Omaha, Nebraska 68101

Dear Dean Dejnozka:

The Westside Community School District is pleased to be participating with the University of Nebraska at Omaha in the planned and implemented pre-service educational and training program for future teachers. The enthusiasm of the first eight students and of the staff members who have helped to shape and design the program is ample testimony of the success of the initial phase.

The declining enrollment of our school system, as it is nationally, and the limited number of future teachers to be educated and employed are strong reasons for the implementation of this program. We share with you the concern to maximize the educational program for future teachers through the establishment of needed competencies, planned individually with each student, carefully monitored through selected school based experiences, and then followed with an intensified and partially paid fifth year pre-teaching experience. This procedure has considerable merit, in our staff's opinion, of developing a more highly qualified entering teacher.

We also believe the "linkage" between the University and the public school system will be most beneficial to our school system. We hope that it will be of value to the staff at the University as well.

We look forward to the continued development of the project.

Sincerely,

H. Vaughn Phelps

H. Vaughn Phelps
Superintendent

HVP:bc